



# PRESS RELEASE

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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### Surveys Used to Tell the Impacts of Agriculture

How are changes in farm programs affecting agricultural productivity? What crop protection tools are being used to produce high quality agricultural products? What land conservation practices are agricultural producers using? Do these conservation practices improve water, soil, and air quality? To answer these questions and gather reliable, objective information about United States agriculture, the Washington Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will conduct three separate surveys this fall: the Fruit Chemical Use Survey, the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), and the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP).

These surveys will collect information about fertilizer usage, chemical applications, and pest management practices used on farm operations. Data collection will begin in October 2005 and continue through December. The information from these surveys will be published in a series of reports beginning in 2006.

The Fruit Chemical Use Survey, focusing on apples, pears, sweet cherries, grapes, and raspberries, will gather information from 788 selected fruit operations in Washington. This survey is an opportunity for growers to tell their story about their actual crop protection program. These data have been used extensively for obtaining and preserving EPA approvals of necessary crop production products.

Similar to the Fruit Chemical Use Survey, the ARMS will gather information regarding fertilizer, chemical, and pest management practices from a sample of 179 potato producers. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is reliant on the ARMS data as a highly accurate and unbiased source of information to assess the economic and environmental impacts of regulating agricultural chemicals. Farm producers have the opportunity to be a voice to tell policy makers and the public how they are good stewards of the land, how much it costs to raise potatoes, and what further assistance may be needed.

The Conservation Effects Assessment Project will be conducted this fall in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). This survey is designed to create a complete nationwide picture of environmental and conservation management conditions. A sample of 157 operators will be contacted for this survey. In addition to fertilizer, chemical usage, and pest management practices, they will be asked for a variety of information on conservation management as well as information about their irrigation practices.

Washington farm operators selected to participate in this year's surveys have been notified by letter, and interviewers will visit them personally to collect their reports at their convenience. "We safeguard the confidentiality of all survey responses," Chris Messer, director of the NASS Washington State Field Office, said. "Data about individual operations are used only in conjunction with information from other producers." Producers will also have an opportunity to obtain credits toward the recertification of their pesticide licenses through a cooperative agreement with the Washington State Department of Agriculture. These surveys are one way that USDA and producers work together to provide the meaningful, accurate, and objective statistical information and services that help keep U.S. agriculture and rural communities among the most robust in the world.

For more information, please call (800)435-5883.

To access the entire release point to: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/wa/press/press05.pdf>

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